

## « Second Annual Rural America Tour »



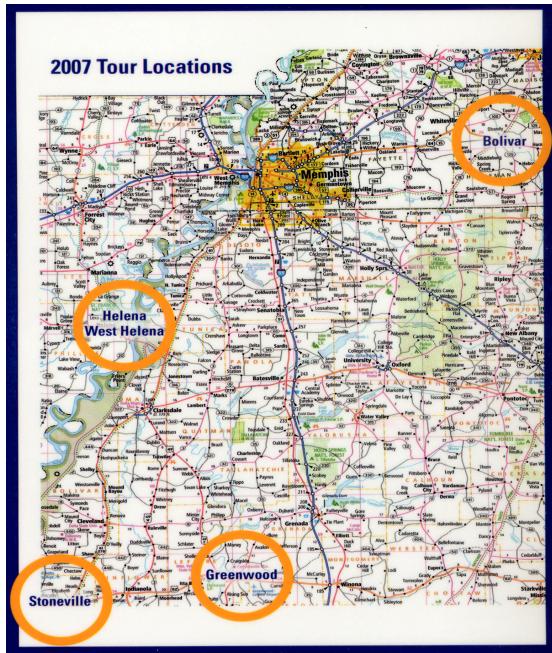
KIPP student welcomes USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Thomas Dorr  
to the KIPP Delta College Preparatory School in Helena, Arkansas





## « Second Annual Rural America Tour »

### August 6 - 9, 2007



Under Secretary Dorr and other USDA officials toured community economic investments in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi supported with funding provided by Rural Development and other USDA agencies. The tour started in Bolivar, Tennessee, and stopped in communities including Helena, Arkansas, and Stoneville and Greenwood, Mississippi.

The first stop was at **Bolivar** City Hall, where city and county officials and business leaders discussed their approach to growth opportunities for their community. Under Secretary Dorr and State Director Mary Ruth Tackett joined Bolivar Mayor Bobby Sain to

announce a federal investment of \$936,400 to fund a business development program in downtown Bolivar and improve fire protection and first-responder service in the area.

► [Full Story](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn/) <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn/>



Pictured left to right holding ceremonial check is State Director Tackett, Mayor Sain and Under Secretary Dorr.



## « Second Annual Rural America Tour »

### August 6 - 9, 2007

On the second day, the tour group traveled to Helena-West Helena, Arkansas to visit economic development projects supporting quality health care and education.



Rural Development invested more than \$4.2 million in the Helena Health Foundation to help establish the **Delta Area Health Education Center**. The facility includes a fitness center, a medical library, a diabetes clinic, classrooms, and an auditorium. Programs include the recruitment and retention of health care professionals, and continuing education for health care professionals, medical students and residency rotations.

Pictured: Under Secretary Dorr and Delta Area Health Education Center professionals discussing the health care and educational opportunities the Center provides the community.

► <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ar/>

#### KIPP Delta College Preparatory School

KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) Delta charter school provides under-served students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and character necessary for success in college and the competitive world beyond. The philosophy at KIPP is that hard work and high expectations can narrow the achievement gap. In five years, students have climbed from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile in language and from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 91<sup>st</sup> in math. Rural Development has invested more than \$2.2 million in the building of the school.



Pictured: Mr. Scott Shirey, Founder and School Director, addressing Under Secretary Dorr and the tour group on the philosophy and core curriculum of the school.



## « Second Annual Rural America Tour »

### August 6 - 9, 2007

#### KIPP Delta College Preparatory School

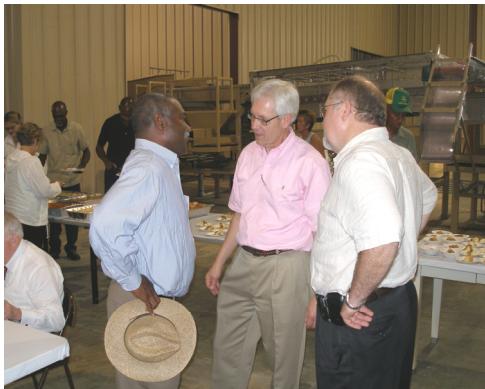


Under Secretary Dorr thanking four students for the school tour and wishing them well in their future endeavors.

#### Delta Cultural Center



Before leaving the town of Helena, Under Secretary Dorr had an opportunity for a brief visit to the Delta Cultural Center.



Mr. Pearly Reed discuss the potential for expanding jobs and income derived from vegetable and specialty crop farms operated by minority farmers.

The last stop in Arkansas was at a **Sweet Potato Storage Facility**. The storage facility is a partnership that works with 25 small-acreage farmers in eastern Arkansas to increase profits, expand markets, and improve quality in the production of sweet potatoes. Rural Development helped to fund the \$2.2 million storage facility.

Pictured: Under Secretary Dorr, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment Gary Mast, and



Pictured: Under Secretary Dorr, Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Richard Bell, Mr. Robert Cole, local businessman, and Ben Steinberg, Southern Financial Partners, discuss the economic climate of agriculture in the region.



## « Second Annual Rural America Tour »

### August 6 - 9, 2007

The final stop on the tour was in Greenwood, Mississippi at the Viking Range Corporation where Under Secretary Dorr toured the manufacturing plant. Viking, who employs more than 1,000 people, has established local training programs to teach specialized manufacturing skills. Viking's growth led the revitalization of the city's downtown, with many of the buildings having received state and national historic preservation awards. Rural Development has invested \$740,000 in the Greenwood operation.



Pictured: Under Secretary Dorr with Mr. Bill Crump, Director of Government Relations, touring the Viking manufacturing plant.

► <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ms/>



Group photo taken at the town square in Bolivar, Tennessee